U.S. Naval Air Station,
General Warehouse
(Ordnance Workshop, Building 40)
West Avenue
Pensacola
Escambia County
Florida

HABS No. FL-213

HABS
FLA,
17-PENSA,
71-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Architectural and Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20243

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HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY

U.S. NAVAL AIR STATION,
GENERAL WAREHOUSE
(ORDNANCE WORKSHOP, BUILDING 40) HABS No. FL-213

Location: West Avenue, U.S. Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Escambia County, Florida.

Present Owner: Commanding Officer.

Present Use: General warehouse.

Significance: Built in 1875 as a general warehouse, the building has retained much of its original detailing including joinery, brickwork and unusual interior cast-iron columns.

PART I. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

A. Physical History:

1. Date of erection: 1875.

2. Architect: The warehouse is probably a modification of a design by Thomas U. Walter, who was an architect with the U.S. Navy Department in Washington, D.C.

3. Original and subsequent owners: The General Warehouse (Building 40) was built on the old Navy Yard and it has been the property of the U.S. Navy during its entire history.

4. Builder, contractor,suppliers: Actual construction of the building was by craftsmen and laborers employed by Navy under the supervision of the Civil Engineer.

5. Original plans and construction: No original plan or drawing of the building has been located, although a design of a similar warehouse by Thomas U. Walter is on microfilm at the National Archives, Washington, D.C.

The building was originally proposed in 1867, but to be built on a different location. At the time plans called for it to be erected parallel to and on the south side of Building 25. It was July, 1874, before the money, $50,000, was allotted for the construction of the warehouse. By then the site had been changed to its present location which is north of and at a right angle to Building 25. According to the Navy Yard Log work on the warehouse, actual construction was done by craftsmen and laborers employed on the Navy Yard under the supervision of the Civil Engineer. The property records on file at the Naval Air

Station, Pensacola, indicate that the cost of construction was $61,708.00, which in view of the amount allotted in 1874, may not be an accurate figure. The building contained 21,720 square feet of space evenly divided (10,860 square feet each) between the first and second floors. This area has been substantially increased to 25,320 square feet through the construction of the mezzanine and the addition of the pipe racks. Capacity of the warehouse is figured at 80 per cent or 20,256 square feet.

6. Alterations and additions: Hurricane damage from the storm of September 1906 required repairs which were not completed until 1908. In that year the slate roof was removed and replaced with metallic shingles, the side gables repaired and the sashes glazed. Other repairs were also done. Electrical lighting was installed in 1917 and the building was rewired for modern lighting in 1957. A 1917 drawing shows an elevator installed which is described in the property records as a small, manually operated elevator. In 1956, a hydraulic elevator was put in the building. In 1963, the elevator was removed and a monorail and an electric hoist substituted for it at a cost of $924.00. As a precautionary measure with the U.S. entry into World War I in 1917, Building 40 was camouflaged. A number of photographs from that era show this building in its multi-colored camouflage suit. The camouflage paint was covered over when the building was repainted sometime between 1926 and 1932. Extensive hurricane damage in 1926 called for measures to prevent structural damage to the building. Thus, in 1930 tie rods and truss anchor straps were installed. Mechanical fire service which included two fire hose rack mountings with fifty feet of fire hose for each rack were added to the first and second floors in 1935. These hoses were connected to the twelve inch fire main. An automatic sprinkler system was added in 1942. The most important work accomplished in the 1930s was the installation of storage racks in October of 1937. This innovation which created a mezzanine on the west side between the first and second floors increased the area of the building from 21,720 square feet to 25,320 square feet. Pipe racks have been installed in the northeast half of the first floor from floor to mezzanine. Pipe racks have also been constructed in the southeast half of the first floor from floor to ceiling. This has permitted the convenient storage of pipe of various dimensions. No dates for the construction of the pipe racks have been found. At one time railroad racks ran through the building (north to south) which have since been removed. The tracks may date from the construction of the warehouse in 1875. Two side entrances on the west side of the building have been bricked-in, but no date has been assigned this work. The

most recent work on the building's exterior occurred in 1970 when it was sandblasted and waterproofed by the Coatings Application and Waterproofing Company of St. Louis, Missouri. Cost of the work was $6,428.00

B. Historical Context: The building was originally constructed as a general warehouse. Rear Admiral Lucien Young's history of the Old Navy Yard (p. 22) states the building was converted in 1876 into quarters for the Marine Guard because the stables and carriage house which they had occupied were unsuited for that purpose. A 1882 floor plan shows the building as an Ordnance Storehouse. A 1886 Navy Yard map, lists it as Building No. 46, and at the time was being used as an Ordnance Storehouse for the Lighthouse Department. A floor plan of about 1895 indicates the first floor used as store rooms for gun carriages and ordnance. The second floor was devoted to the repair of breechings with two offices on the north end. References in 1905 and 1906 list it as a general storehouse. In 1908 it was referred to as the Supplies and Accounts storehouse and offices. In 1917, after the reopening of the old Navy Yard as an aeronautical station, the warehouse was designated as a general stores building. Local tradition indicates that it was converted into a storehouse for naval aviator's flying gear and as a parachute loft, although no specific dates were assigned. In 1972 the building was used as a general storehouse (metal and clothing) and was officially described as a General Warehouse/Ready Issue.

Prepared by: Dr. William S. Coker
Historian
Historic American Buildings Survey
Summer 1972

PART II. ARCHITECUTRAL INFORMATION

A. General Statement:

1. Architectural character: The structure is a sophisticated example of utilitarian architectural design which retains much of its original joinery and structural details.

2. Condition of fabric: Though sandblasted and minimumly repointed in 1970, the structure is generally sound and in a good state of repair. There has been some vertical cracking which has been patched.

B. Description of Exterior:

1. Over-all dimensions: This building, rectangular in plan, is 60'-1" (five-bays) x 180' (eleven bays). It is two stories high, though the fenestration of the front and rear pediments suggest 2½ stories.

2. Foundations: The foundations which appear above grade are rock-faced, dressed granite. On a drawing dated 1917 and located in the NAS Public Works Center files, the foundations are indicated as 3' in thickness and 6' high.

3. Walls: The walls are common bond brick, salmon in color with light-color mortar, and includes a header course. The first floor walls are 29' thick, narrowing to 26" at the second floor level to receive the floor joists.

4. Structural system, framing: The exterior walls are brick bearing walls supporting the second floor 3" x 13½" joists approximately 18" on center, and the roof trusses approximately 16' on center. The trusses are constructed from 9" x 12" members and are carried on plates set into the masonry and held in place with iron straps. Vertical steel tie rods are introduced into each truss to resist hurricance forces. The trusses carry 6" x 9" purlins approximately 7'-6" on center, which carry the 3" x 8" roof rafters 24" on center and the roof sheathing. Iron reinforcement is used at major truss joints. At the first floor two rows of cast-iron columns, 16' on center, support the floor joists which are carried on continuous 10" x 14" beams running the length of the structure. The columns, modified Roman Doric with a cavetto capital detail, have integral cast supports for an earlier or different framing system. A mezzanine level has been added between the west row of columns and the exterior wall to provide additional storage.

5. Porches: The doorways have smooth granite sills which are actually part of the granite foundation which projects approximately 2" from the brick wall with a slight beveled wash. There are concrete ramps extending from the front and rear service doorways and from the West Avenue doorways.

6. Openings:

   a. Doorways and doors: There are three side service doorways on each long elevation. Two have been bricked-in, the brick being painted a dark brown trim color to simulate the wood doors on the West Avenue elevation. The openings have segmental brick arches, two stretchers in depth. The existing side doors each have two sliding leaves held in place by a wooden track over their openings and a track formed into the concrete floor in the interior. The doors are constructed from 5½" tongue-and-groove boards with a ¼" bead on both sides. The boarding is applied to a wooden, fully mortise and tenon, stile-and-rail frame fabricated from 2" x 8" lumber, with the bottom rail being from 3½" x 12" lumber. There is a center lock rail.

   At the front and rear, later doorways, the full height of the first floor, have been cut in enlarging original openings to accommodate train tracks which ran through the building. The brick masonry is carried on exposed steel beam lintels. The jambs have been stuccoed. The

inswinging double doors of each doorway are constructed from 3½" tongue-and-groove boards, beaded on the exterior only and applied to a frame with half lapped joints and diagonal bracing. A modern access door has been cut into one leaf of the north doors. The north facade also has an original access door in the west bay adjacent to the central service doorway. This doorway, now permanently closed, has two outswinging leaves of stile-and-rail construction with two panels each with panel molding. A two-light transom above a molded transom bar fills the opening. The right leaf has a dutchman filling an early hardware mortise.

b. Windows: Typically the windows, with segmental arches a stretcher and header in depth, have six-over-six light double hung wooden sash. The sills are smooth granite, while the frames appear to be of solid stock with a ½" edge bead and mortised and tenoned at the heads. The original sash have 3/4" muntins and are fully mortised and tenoned. Generally the glass size is 12" x 19", though some replacement lower sash have smaller nine-light glazing.

In the tympanum of the front and rear pediments there are Palladian type windows with flush granite lintels. The lintels are splayed above the sidelights and form a semicircular arch over the central windows which have radiating muntins over three lights in their upper sash similar to the lower sash lights. The sidelights, separated from the central windows by brick mullions, have two-over-two lights. Each window unit has a continuous granite sill.

7. Roof:

a. Shape, covering: The gabled roof is covered with standing seam tin. The front and rear pediments form parapets which project slightly above the roof planes.

b. Cornice, eaves: Continuous around the building is a corbelled brick architrave band which defines the bottom of a frieze space. Above the frieze space and below the wood soffit and facia supporting the wooden eave cyma recta crown molding, is a corbeled brick bed molding. All the corbeling consists of four brick courses.

The full eave cornice extends up the rake forming the gable pediments. The corbeling and frieze space masonry follows the angle of the rake.

Beam and truss extend through the masonry into the frieze space.

C. Description of Interior:

1. Floor plans:

a. First floor: The first floor is generally one large open space divided into three distinct longitudinal areas by the interior cast-iron columns. The central space is open for free access to the various storage areas on either side, which at the west has been subdivided by a mezzanine level for additional storage. There is a small office enclosure of later consturction in the northeast corner.

b. Second floor: The second floor is basically one large space opening into the exposed roof framing. Across the south end there is a partition sheathed in horizontal, 5/4" flush boarding with two doorways alternating with three window openings. The partition extends the height of the bottom cord of the trusses and has a ceiling over its two rooms. A small office is located near the existing entrance door.

2. Stairways: The only existing means of access to the second floor is by a modern, steel stairway at the northeast corner on the exterior. The 1917 floor plans of the structure indicates that there were two stairways within the building. One was in the southeast corner and one was in conjunction with a lift in the present open hoistway in center of the second floor.

3. Flooring: The first floor is concrete laid over an earlier material as the granite plinths of the cast-iron columns barely project above the surface of the floor. The inswinging end doors are provided with shallow areaways which accommodate the higher floor level.

An early 20th century plat of the Naval Air Station indicates that a train track ran through the building, evidence of which exists in the concrete patching in granite sills of the front and rear service doorways.

4. Wall and ceiling finish: The walls are whitewashed brick, though there is a high wainscot painted around the second floor. The ceilings are whitewashed structural members and exposed undersides of flooring and roof sheathing.

5. Doorways and doors: The only interior doorways and door of note are at the second floor partition. The doorways with their transoms have flat boards with applied, molded backband trim. The surviving transom has two lights, while the surviving door is stile-and-rail construction with four panels and panel molding.

6. Windows: The second floor partition has borrowed light openings which have molded sills and trim similar to the doorways. All of these windows have been boarded over, though one six-light upper sash survives in one opening.

   The interior reveals that all exterior windows have double row lock elliptical arches at their heads, except those of the Palladian windows which have segmental arches over the sidelights and semicircular arches over the central windows.

7. Decorative features and trim: The only trim of note is the molded backband trim of the second floor partition openings and the panel molding of the original doors. In addition, the cast-iron columns have unusual cavetto capitals with exaggerated neckings. The detail of the capitals and necking is similar to the columns of Building 34.

8. Hardware: The sliding doors have the most interested hardware, a cast-iron latch which survives on two pairs of doors. The bar latches pivot on the back plates, which are screwed to the doors, and are notched over their keepers. There are cast-iron butt hinges on the access doors. The inswinging service doors have large wrought-iron strap hinges bolted to the doors hung on pintles bolted through the masonry. There is a modern hoist at the early hoistway opening in the second floor.

9. Mechanical equipment:

   a. Heating: There are cast-iron steam raditors in the building supplied by the central heating plant.

   b. Lighting: The lighting is modern flourescent and incandescent.

D. Site:

   a. General setting and orientation: The structure is oriented north and south with the main service entrance being on the north facade. To the west the building aligns with West Avenue and is separated from the street by concrete sidewalks. Driveways at the north and south provide access to a paved parking lot extending from the east elevation.

Prepared by: Rodd L. Wheaton, Architect
Summer 1972

PART III. SOURCES OF INFORMATION

A. Original Architectural Drawings and other records:

Measured drawings, floor plans and index cards indicating architectural, mechanical, electrical and general work on the warehouse in Engineering Department, Public Workds Center, NAS Pensacola, Florida. Records are basically World War I to present.

Measured drawings, floor plans, Navy Yard maps in Bureau of Yard and Docks Plan Files, Navy Department, on microfilm, copy in Old Military Records Branch, National Archives, Washington, D.C. Index (16 mm.) see last part of Reel 13 and first part of Reel 14. Drawings, etc. of Pensacola Navy Yard are numbered 800-1-1 to 800-45-407, Reels 641 through 648.5 (35 mm.). Records date from about 1829 to end of World War II.

B. Early Views: There are six historic views of the warehouse in the photgraphic file of the Naval Aviation Museum, NAS Pensacola, Florida: (1) view of a portion of the warehouse with tents by its side, 1 November 1917, Negative number 010060; (2, 3 and 4) views show the warehouse camouflaged and as just one of several buildings in each view; 2 is dated 8 October 1918; Negative number 010064; 3 is dated 15 July 1919, Negative number 010065; and 4 is dated 1 August 1919, Negative number 010011; (5) view of the warehouse after it had been repainted but before the removal of Old Warrington indicating it was probably taken between 1926 and 1931, Negative number 010273; (6) a distant view of the warehouse after removal of Old Warrington indicating it was taken about 1933-35, Negative number 010020.

C. Bibliography:

1. Primary and unpublished sources:

Building Property Records, Plant Account Office, Public Works Center, NAS Pensacola, Florida.

Washington, D.C. National Archives. Old Military Records Branch. Log of Pensacola Navy Yard (selected years), Group 45 Entry 336.

2. Secondary and published sources:

U.S. Navy. Annual Reports of the Navy Department. Washington, 1867.

Young, Lucien. United States Navy Yard and Station. Copy in NAS Library, Pensacola. Written 1910, published 1964.

PART IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS) under joint sponsorship of the National Park Service, The American Revolution Bicentennial Commission of Florida, and the Historic Pensacola Preservation Board. Measured and drawn during the summer of 1972 under the direction of John Poppeliers, chief of HABS, by: Rodd L. Wheaton (Architect, HABS), June Project Supervisor; John A. Sanderson (University of Florida), July-August Project Supervisor; Dr. William S. Coker (University of West Florida), Historian; John M. Szubski (Princeton University), Architect; and by Student Assistant Architects: J. Tucker Bishop (University of Texas, Austin); John C. Hecker (University of Illinois, Urbana) and Scott A. Kinzy (University of Nebraska) at the United States Naval Air Station, Pensacola, Florida. Susan McCown, a HABS staff historian in the Washington, D.C. office, edited the written descriptive and architectural data in the fall of 1980. Jack Boucher, a HABS staff photographer, took the documentary photographs in March of 1974.

ADDENDUM TO
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